

Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

News and updates on
Newfoundland and Labrador's
Intangible Cultural
Heritage Program

December 2009
ISSN 1918-7408

ich@heritagefoundation.ca



In this issue

Page 1	Folklife Festival
Page 2	Hobby Horse
Page 3	Hobby Horse Workshop
Page 4	Mummers Parade
Page 5	Full, printable Mummers Festival schedule!

So, what is a Folklife Festival anyway?

One of the goals identified in the Provincial ICH Stragey is to “encourage the celebration of Intangible Cultural Heritage from local to international levels, and to recognize and encourage Intangible Cultural Heritage tradition-bearers and practices.” To achieve this goal, while following and incorporating the concept of community participation, HFNL is working towards the establishment of an annual folklife festival, kicking off this December with mummering as this year’s theme. Where folk festivals focus on music, dance and formal performance, folklife festivals are meant to showcase how we do and make things, how we celebrate customs and other aspects of intangible cultural heritage. The folklife festival is an opportunity

for cultural exchange – a place where audiences can feel free to engage with particular traditions and their respective tradition-bearers-within a 'museum without walls' context. The folklife festival is an invitation for audiences to participate, to learn, dance, dress, move, sing, and interact with tradition-bearers and each other.

The Folklife Festival of Newfoundland and Labrador will identify the rich and varied intangible cultural heritage of communities, and work to make it better known inside and outside of communities. Each year of the program, the coordinating body will identify both a theme for the festival year, for example Christmas mummering traditions this year, other traditions and customs in future years. HFNL will partner with local municipalities, heritage, culture and tourism agencies to make the festival fit its theme and locations each year.

Want to learn more about folklife festivals? Dale Jarvis, ICH Development Officer, and Ryan Davis, Coordinator of the 2009 Mummers Festival, will be offering a day long planning workshop Saturday, February 6th, 2010 in the historic Prince of Wales Loyal Orange Lodge, Cupids. Entitled “**Festivals & Folklife: Project Planning for Cultural Festivals**”, this workshop is designed for groups planning cultural festivals, or for organizers of existing festivals who wish to incorporate some aspect of intangible cultural heritage into their events. It will addresses key issues in how to plan for a successful festival, how to engage tradition bearers, and how to showcase local culture, heritage and traditional knowledge. Tuition is \$20 (includes lunch and materials). For more info, email ich@heritagefoundation.ca or call Dale at 1-888-739-1892 ext2.

The Hobby Horse

by Andrea O'Brien, HFNL

A few years ago I asked my Girl Guide unit to bring in an object that had special meaning for their family. One girl brought a hobby horse that her uncle had used while mummering. It was a huge likeness of a horse's head, made from a piece of heavy Styrofoam covered with black fake fur, complete with ping-pong eyeballs and a mouth that snapped open and shut on a hinge. The girl described how her uncle would prop the head on an axe handle and cover himself with a blanket to form the horse's body. She further explained that her uncle was continuing a tradition handed down from his father, who had also had a hobby horse. The other girls in the unit looked on bewildered, unsure of how this object fit into the contemporary mummering tradition they were familiar with.

During my early years as a folklore student I had written a paper about this family—the keepers of the hobby horse in my home community of Cape Broyle on the Southern Shore of the Avalon Peninsula. The hobby horse had been kept by this family for many decades and was a well-known part of the community's mummering tradition. While the people I spoke with did not know the origins of the practice, they suggested that it was introduced to Cape Broyle from the neighbouring communities of Brigus South and Admiral's Cove, and that it may have been related to the older custom of mummers carrying a replica of a bull's head. At that time, mummers from Brigus South and Admiral's Cove came to Cape Broyle during Christmas, and one man recalled,

"There'd be as high as fifteen, twenty people sometimes. And they had what we call the hobby-horse and they had the old bull, or imitations of them. And they'd be dressed in all different costumes and they'd go from house to house, have a drink, have a dance. And then they'd have one particular house in the settlement that they'd stay at to the end of their round-up. And there they'd have a party and after a while they'd get too warm and have a few drinks under their belts and they'd undress, to a certain extent anyway, and they'd stay there for the rest of the night."

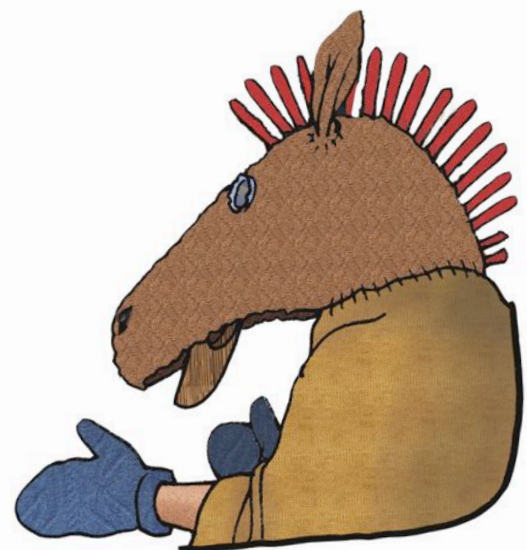
By the mid 1900s, a man in Cape Broyle was known as the keeper of the hobby horse. One of the mummers from the group that travelled with him

described the hobby horse as having the

"shape of a horse's head. It was held up by the person carrying it on a stick. It was covered with fur and hair, or a mane anyway. Had eyes and nostrils. And a piece of line protruded through the top of the head and attached to the lower part of the jaw, and by pulling on the string the mouth would open. And the same thing applied to the bull that the old people used to have. It had a head the shape of a bull, had horns and the same way they could manipulate the mouth by pulling a string."

In Cape Broyle the hobby horse was never intended to be a violent figure. Even so, the hobby horse got up to its share of mischief. The hobby horse would often enter a house, look for the string which hung from the light in the ceiling and pull the string with its mouth to turn the lights off. When the hobby horse entered a house, small children would often hide from it, but a mummer recalled that

"The bigger ones, after a little while they'd get nerve enough to go over close to it and the old horse would keep snapping at them so that they wouldn't get too close to find out really who was underneath the costume. Ah, it created a stir





in a house. A lot of people were afraid of it."

On one occasion, the keeper of the hobby horse loaned it to one of the other mummers in his group, who recalled,

"I got a loan of the hobby-horse and I was going up to a fellow's one night. He hadn't seen the hobby-horse before that and I was going to bring it into the house. Anyway, on the way up I was passing by the church and a fellow was standing up by the church. It was dark. There was no lights around at that time only the light over the church door. He was standing by the church door and when I passed by I started to go up to the church. And when I did, this fellow left and went into the church. And I was bold enough. I followed him into the church. And when I got inside he was going over the alter rails. So I decided I was gone far enough with it and I turned and I came back. But the next day I was speaking to the old fellow and he was after finding out who carried a horse and he said, 'I have a heart condition and when I saw you coming I didn't know who it was and I really didn't know what it was. If you had come any further I would possibly have died'. He was quite concerned you know. And I thought it was only a joke. I didn't realize that I frightened him that much."

People in communities outside Cape Broyle were wary of the hobby horse and whenever the group went to another community they would often knock at the door, tell the person who answered that they had the hobby horse, that they were from Cape Broyle and that they would like permission to come in. Despite the polite introduction, households were still subject to the mischief of the hobby horse. On one occasion when the Cape Broyle mummers group went to the community of Tors Cove the hobby horse chased a hysterical women up the stairs where she hid under the bed. The other mummers had to come upstairs and bring the hobby horse back down.

The hobby horse hasn't roamed the streets of Cape Broyle in a few years. Perhaps this Christmas I may finally get up the nerve and ask to borrow it—to see what trouble the group of mummers I go out with can get into.

Hobby Horse Making Workshops

This is not your typical children's toy—the common horse-head on a stick. No, no, we're talking about something a bit more frightening. With wandering bottle cap eyes and nails for teeth, the janney's 'hobby horse' or 'horsey-hops' is an odd creature. You can hear the jaws of the hobby horse 'snocking' loudly as it bumbles around. The hobby horse is no longer a common sight. But we hope with these workshops to repopulate the province with this most peculiar breed. Come to these sessions, build a hobby horse, and then ride it over to the Mummer's Parade. We want a cavalry and we need your help.

There are THREE separate workshops offered:

Saturday, December 12th 1:00pm-5:00pm

Tuesday, December 15th 7:00pm-9:30pm

Saturday, December 19th 1:00pm-5:00pm

Feel free to drop in to any of these open workshop times. However we suggest reserving at least three hours to complete a project. Some participants might need to attend more than one workshop to finish their projects.

Location: Victoria Park Pool House (at the end of Angel Place off Alexander Street—the only building in Victoria Park). Please park in the public lot beside the Victoria Park ball field, accessed off Sudbury Street. It is permit parking only on Angel Place so please don't risk getting a ticket! We will provide all the basic materials for these workshops. However, we encourage you to bring along any extra materials to make your hobby horses extra fancy! We like to use recycled materials whenever possible. Presented in collaboration with The Friends of Victoria Park, (celebrating their 10th Annual Lantern Festival this summer) as part of the First Annual Folklife Festival of Newfoundland & Labrador.



Calling all mummers! The Mummers Parade needs you!

The Mummers Parade needs you...and in disguise. We invite all mummers, janneys, hobby horses, Christmas bulls, nallajuit, ribbon fools, wren boys, and wren girls to this most exciting people's parade. According to some accounts, St. John's used to have a mummers parade in the 1800s, and groups of mummers still parade from house to house throughout the province. But you won't see too many mummers parading the streets of St. John's these days. We'd like to change that. So shake out those long johns and borrow your Aunt's size 42 bra. We're calling all mummers to the Mummers Parade. We hope for more mummers than spectators in what might be the most exuberant, participant-focused parade in the province. Bring your music makers, disguises, hobby horses, wren sticks, songs, and dances.

PARADE DATE: Sunday, December 20th

PARADE LINE-UP: Between 1:00 pm and 1:15 pm

PARADE START TIME: 1:30 pm

RIG UP START TIME: 11:30 am

LOCATION: Macpherson Elementary School. 40 Newtown Road
(behind Sobey's on Merrymeeting Road).

PARKING: There is no parking available at MacPherson School.

The parade will start at MacPherson Elementary, pass through the Georgestown neighbourhood, and end on the grounds of The Rooms for a Christmas concert and Mummers Jam with music, dancing, and spaces for impromptu performances. This is an afternoon, family/community event and everyone is welcome. We do have some rules which must be followed:

- This is a walking parade. Motorized vehicles are not allowed.
- Alcohol is strictly prohibited.
- This is a non-commercial event. Advertising, promotions, and give-aways are not permitted.

Please come with a non-perishable food item to help assist the Community Food Sharing Association (an initiative of the Georgestown Neighbourhood Association). The Georgestown Neighbourhood Association (GNA) is organizing a food drive in support of the Community Food Sharing Association in conjunction with the Mummers Parade on Sunday, December 20th. Food donations can be dropped off during the rig up at MacPherson School prior to the parade or at the Rooms at the end of the parade. In addition, food-bank mummers will be collecting donations during the parade.

"Georgetown is an old and culturally rich neighbourhood with a very strong sense of community," says Elizabeth Oliver, GNA Chair. "In many ways, it is almost a village within the city. Our Neighbourhood Association, as part of its mandate, works to maintain and enhance these positive aspects of the community. The Mummers Parade is a wonderful fit! The Board also felt that the Parade would be a great time for the neighbourhood to share the holiday spirit with the whole city -- organizing a food drive seemed a good way to do that, and we are delighted that the Festival organizers have given us the opportunity."

For full details on the parade, visit the Mummers Festival website at <http://www.mummersfestival.ca>





Schedule of events

www.mummersfestival.ca

Thursday, November 26

Hark, What's the Noise?

An exhibition of fine art and craft dedicated to the mummering tradition.

Time: Opening reception 7:00pm to 9:00pm.

Location: The Heritage Art Gallery (309 Water Street, 2nd Floor)

Wednesday, December 2

Janney Film Night

Presenting *Mummers and Masks* and *Mum's the Word*.

Time: 7:00pm – 8:30pm

Location: The Rooms

Saturday, December 5

"How Do You Mummer Anyway?" A Public Forum with Mummers

Hear about the many aspects of a mummer's night out.

Time: 2:00pm-3:00pm

Location: The Rooms

Torbay Winter Lights Parade

With a Mummer's Float by the Torbay Museum and Holy Trinity School.

Time: 6:00pm

Location: Torbay Road: Jack Byrne Arena to Kinsmen Centre

Sunday, December 6

The Sights Before Christmas

A children's show with mummers.

Time: Shows at 1:30 and 3:30

Location: The Rooms

Mummering Memories

Bring your mummer photos, artifacts, and stories for our digital archives.

Time: 2:00pm-4:00pm

Location: The Rooms

Make your own Pocket Mummer

Create your own mummer to take with you anywhere.

Time: 2:00pm—4:00pm

Location: The Room

Wednesday, December 9

Mummering Today: A contemporary look at mummering traditions

Folklorists from Memorial University explore how the mummering tradition manifests itself in our modern-day culture.

Time: 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Location: The Rooms

Saturday, December 12

Hobby Horse and Wren Stick Workshop

Make hobby horses, wren sticks, and other regalia for the Mummers Parade

Time: 1:00pm – 5:00pm (the first of three workshops)

Location: Victoria Park Poolhouse

Sunday, December 13

Mummers' Play

For Love of Learning Community Theatre's version of the Mummers' Play

Time: Shows at 2:00pm and 3:00pm

Location: The Rooms

Making Mummers Masks

Turn recycled materials and old hats into clever disguises.

Time: 2:00pm—4:00pm

Location: The Rooms

Tuesday, December 15

Hobby Horse and Wren Stick Workshop

Make hobby horses, wren sticks, and other regalia for the Mummers Parade

Time: 7:00pm – 9:30pm (the second of three workshops)

Location: Victoria Park Poolhouse

Wednesday, December 16

Presentation: The Philadelphia Mummers Parade

E.A. Kennedy presents the history and imagery of the renowned Philadelphia Mummers Parade

Time: 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Location: The Rooms

Thursday, December 17

Framing Festivals: The art of photographing events

E. A. Kennedy offers a workshop on how to document parades and events.

Time: December 17, 2009 - 7:00pm

Location: Memorial University: Arts Building Room A 1043

Saturday, December 19

Hobby Horse and Wren Stick Workshop

Make hobby horses, wren sticks, and other festive regalia for the Mummers Parade.

Time: 1:00pm – 5:00pm (the third of three workshops)

Location: Victoria Park Poolhouse

Sunday, December 20

Rig Up

Come get rigged up for the Mummers Parade. Mix and match a disguise.

Time: 11:30am – 1:15pm

Location: MacPherson Elementary School

Mummers Parade

The parade needs YOU! We want you rigged up and IN the parade.

Time: Parade line up at 1:00pm

Location: MacPherson Elementary School

Mummers Parade Concert and Mummers Jam

Join us for a rousing Christmas concert, followed by a Mummers Jam for all that wish to perform.

Time: 3:00pm

Location: The Rooms